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What rebel Poles believe

BY A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

THE two young Warsaw University lecturers, Jacek Kuron and Karol Modzelewski, who were sentenced by a Warsaw court on Wednesday to three and a half years' imprisonment on charges of anti-State offences, are the authors of a remarkable document, now being circulated in Britain, which calls for a new Socialist revolution to overthrow the "bureaucratic" Stalinist system of their country.

Their manifesto has been translated by the far-left International Socialists in Britain who have arranged its distribution throughout Western Europe and in Japan and North America. It is already circulating in a number of Communist countries including Czechoslovakia.

The writers, who were described as "the spiritual leaders" of last year's university unrest, belong to a Left-wing group which calls for complete working-class democracy, the establishment of workers' councils, and an end to "bureaucratic class rule" by Poland's Communists. They make little attempt to disguise their sympathy with the ideas of far-Left groups in the West who have been active in the universities and in protest movements against the Vietnam war.

Manifesto

The gist of their political case, which is now elaborated in their manifesto, caused a sensation when it was first released in Poland more than two years ago. They condemn the Polish Communist bureaucracy as a new class which holds nothing in common with Marxism. They document the growing privileges of the leadership of the party and of the managers of State factories and financial institutions.

They describe events since

October 1956, when the Gomulka wing of the party triumphed over the old-line Stalinists. Kuron and Modzelewski claim that growing conflict has developed, not only between the Polish State capitalist bureaucracy and the workers, but also between the bureaucracy and the growing professional and managerial middle class. This latter group they describe as the "technocracy."

The authors describe how the Gomulka leadership eventually fought against the workers' demands for more democratisation and for the establishment of factory workers' councils. The workers' opposition was crushed after street battles in Lodz and Warsaw between Government forces and striking workers.

In addition they describe the reimposition of press censorship and a clamp-down on internal Communist Party discussion which had developed temporarily after 1956. Kuron and Modzelewski comment: "In this way, all the achievements of October which exceeded the framework of an internal reform of the system were liquidated and the October Left was finally crushed."

The authors of the open letter also give a mass of factual material illustrating the gulf between the living standards of the working class and of the bureaucracy. They also cite the continuing shortage of consumer goods and housing for most workers.

They claim that the competitive relationship between Polish industry and the world market is used by the bureaucracy to justify sacrificing higher living standards to the needs of investment, or capital accumulation.

Of the need for a Socialist "antibureaucratic" revolution in Poland, Kuron and Modzelewski say: "We do not consider the antibureaucratic revolution to be a purely Polish

affair. The economic and social contradictions appear in a mature form in all the industrialised bureaucratic countries: in Czechoslovakia, the German Democratic Republic, Hungary, and Russia."

The manifesto says that the regimes in Eastern Europe have compromised socialism in the eyes of workers in the West, but they make it clear that the socialism they envisage is equally hostile to "Western imperialism and monopoly capitalism" as it is to Stalinist State capitalism.

It is clear from the manifesto that the authors have been strongly influenced by the Trotskyist tradition which was quite strong in Poland before the war. But in their characterisation of the Communist system as State capitalism and of the bureaucracy as a ruling class they have gone beyond the traditional Trotskyist formula that the Communist States are "bureaucratised but basically workers' States."

Nervousness

Kuron and Modzelewski, along with other Left-wing writers and workers, have already spent a considerable time in prison since the publication of the manifesto. The severity of their sentences, given the fact that charges of being linked "with Western intelligence" could not be proved, indicates the nervousness with which the Communist authorities regard their influence, not only in Poland but, increasingly, in Czechoslovakia.

The International Socialists have a longer article condemning the trial in the latest issue of their weekly paper "Socialist Worker." They plan a protest march to the Polish Embassy in London on Saturday after a public meeting commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the murder of the German Marxist Rosa Luxemburg.

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LENINGRAD COURT SAID TO CONVICT 3

Goldwater Book Reported
Seized With Dissidents

MOSCOW, Dec. 28 (AP)—A court in Leningrad was reported today to have sentenced three intellectuals to prison on conviction of having circulated anti-Soviet literature. Official confirmation of the report could not be obtained. The trial has not been reported in the Soviet press.

Sources here said that the three men had been convicted under Article 70 of the Russian Republic's Criminal Code, which provides up to seven

years' imprisonment for anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda.

The defendants were identified as Lev Kvachevsky, a 30-year-old chemical engineer, who was sentenced to four years; Yuri Gendler, 33, a lawyer, sentenced to three years, and Anatoly Studentkov, 33, an engineer who received a one-year term.

They were arrested by the secret police in August during a raid on Mr. Gendler's apartment while they were drafting

a letter to the Soviet authorities to protest pressures on the reform regime in Czechoslovakia. This was before the invasion.

The charges against the three involved the possession and distribution of "anti-Soviet" literature seized during the raid, the sources said.

Book by Goldwater Cited

Among books cited as evidence by the prosecution, the sources said, were "The New

Class" by Milovan Djilas, the Yugoslav political dissident, "Conservative," by Barry M. Goldwater.

Mr. Gendler and Mr. Studentkov were said to have pleaded guilty. Mr. Kvachevsky admitted only that the facts presented by the prosecutor were accurate, the sources said.

They added the literature used as evidence had included several protests by Soviet intellectuals against trails of fellow dissidents.

One protest document said to have been cited was signed by Mrs. Yuli M. Daniel, wife of the imprisoned writer, and Pavel M. Litvinov, grandson of Maxim M. Litvinov, the late Foreign Minister.

Mrs. Daniel and Mr. Litvinov were arrested and sent into Siberian exile for a demonstration on Red Square against the invasion of Czechoslovakia.

The Leningrad trial began Dec. 17 and ended Thursday.

PROTESTER CONSIDERED
17 January 1959

CPYRGHT

Protest on trial in Poland

A new season of political trials is now under way in Poland. The tough sentences passed against the two radical young lecturers, Kuron and Modzelewski, on Wednesday were followed yesterday by the opening of proceedings against four Warsaw students. All were charged with participating in secret organisations. But the real count against them is their part in the wave of student unrest last March which washed over Warsaw university after the January upheaval across the border in Czechoslovakia. The Polish leadership squashed that crisis successfully, but only at the cost of a purge against the intellectuals which degenerated at times into anti-Semitism.

The significance of the new trials lies in their timing, and in their secrecy. The fact that

they are being held in closed court, and have taken ten months to stage suggests that Mr. Gomulka is still highly uneasy about the popular reaction to them. Show trials were presumably too risky. For the feeling which Kuron and Modzelewski and the others represent is the same contagious thirst for democracy which is stirring throughout Eastern Europe (and indeed is echoed in some of the Western student rhetoric). It is all the more subversive for being impeccably Marxist. In their impressive manifesto, Kuron and Modzelewski attack the party bureaucracy in Poland as a self-perpetuating class élite, that stifles democracy and betrays the interests of working people. This is too near the truth for the comfort of the élite.